

Did you know...

- Many older paints contain lead (used to color the paint) and mercury (used as a biocide to kill fungus and other microorganisms). Both of these chemicals are poisons that can accumulate in the body, causing serious health problems, particularly in children. These paints should always be brought to a Tox Drops site for proper disposal.
- Many oil-based paints release fumes that can be flammable or combustible. Improper storage or disposal of these materials can be a fire hazard. These paints should always be brought to a Tox Drops site for proper disposal.
- Use of oil-based or spray paints during sunny and hot weather can contribute to the formation of ground-level ozone, which can cause breathing difficulties for people with asthma or other respiratory problems. To learn more about ground-level ozone and its effects, call 327-4AIR (4247) or visit www.Knozone.com.

Americans use 3 million gallons of paint every day, totaling more than a billion gallons every year.

That amount of paint could fill a lake 20 feet deep, 4 miles long and 1 mile wide.

City of Indianapolis Department of Public Works

**Office of Environmental Services
2700 S. Belmont Avenue
Indianapolis, Indiana 46221**

**Main phone: 317-327-4000
Fax: 317-327-4954
Customer Service: 317-327-4622**

**For more information on
Tox Drops:
Call 327-4TOX (4869)**



**200 East Washington Street, Suite 2460
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204**

www.Indy.Gov/DPW



Managing Household Wastes

Paints and Paint-Related Products



Tox Drops

Greg Ballard, Mayor of Indianapolis

Many of the paint and coating products we use are potentially hazardous to the environment. This brochure explains proper disposal methods for these products.

As always, the best way to protect our environment is by source reduction. By purchasing only the amount of paint and paint-related materials you need for a project, or by using all you have for a second coat or another project, we can virtually eliminate the paint wastes we generate.

Types of paint

There are hundreds of different types of paint and coatings available for use by today's homeowner. Nearly all of them pose environmental problems if improperly disposed.

There are two main types of paint--latex and solvent-based.

Latex paints, where the main ingredient is water, are usually labeled with the words "water-based," "clean with soap and water," "vinyl" or "acrylic."

Solvent-based paints, which are based on organic solvents, usually have the words "oil-based," "alkyd," "urethane," "epoxy," "varnish," "clean with mineral spirits or paint thinner," "contains petroleum distillates," or "combustible: keep away from heat and flame." These paints should always be brought to a Tox Drops site for proper disposal.

Disposal methods are different for each type of product composition. The majority of household paints sold today are latex.

If you are unsure about the paint composition, read the label and contact the manufacturer for information. Many companies have a web address or toll-free number printed on the label.

How are you managing your leftover paint and paint-related products? Some people don't know what to do with their leftover paint. You should not place it out with your regular trash, and it's illegal to pour it down the drain. Here's what you should do depending on the type of paint you have:

Water-based paints

Today's water-based paints are not hazardous and can be disposed with regular waste, if completely dried out.

Cans that are less than 1/3 full can be dried by adding kitty litter to the can until the liquid is absorbed. The cans may then be left with the lid off to be picked up with your regular trash.

Larger amounts may be dried by pouring the paint into a box with kitty litter or layers of newspaper.

Once the liquid is completely absorbed, the dry material can be left with your regular trash.

Oil-based paints

Oil-based paints, stains and varnishes are hazardous and should be properly disposed of at one of DPW's Tox Drops locations. If you need information about the Tox Drops program or schedule please contact us at 327-4TOX (4869) or visit our website at www.Indy.Gov/DPW.

Thinners, turpentine and mineral spirits

Paint thinners, turpentine and mineral spirits can be reused! Let the solid particles settle to the bottom of a closed container, then pour off the clear liquid. Store it in a clean container for use with another project.

These materials are hazardous and should not be placed with your regular trash or poured down the drain. They should always be brought to one of DPW's Tox Drops sites for proper disposal.

Paints and air quality

The use of oil-based paints can contribute to the formation of ground-level ozone.

Ground-level ozone, or smog, is a problem in central Indiana. Ground-level ozone is formed when oxygen, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) or nitrogen oxides (NOx) chemically react in the presence of sunlight, especially during hot weather. The more intense and direct the sun's rays are and the warmer the temperature is, the more ground-level ozone is formed.

Oil-based paints should not be used on Knozone Action Days. Knozone Action Days are declared when conditions are favorable for the formation of ground-level ozone. Announcements will be made through local media when Knozone Action Days are declared. Water-based paints should be used as an alternative to oil-based paints.

For more information on Knozone Action Days and what you can do to prevent the formation of ground-level ozone, call 327-4AIR (4297) or visit www.Knozone.com.

